MINUTES

OF THE

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

NORTH RIVER UNITED BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

COVENED AT UNION MEETING HOUSE,

FAYETTE COUNTY, ALA.

From the 12th *to the* 14th *of October*, 1838.

Tuscaloosa:
PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE FLAG OF THE UNION.
1839.

MINUTES.

1. The introductory sermon was delivered according to previous appointment, by Elder Elijah Barbee, from the Acts of the Apostles, 17th chapter 1st, 2d and 3d verses.

2. After a short intermission, the delegates assembled in the church and the Association was opened by prayer by David Andrews.

3. Called for and read Letters from the several Churches.—Enrolled the names of the delegates and minuted the state of the Churches.

4. Elected Elder David Andrews Moderator, and Isaac Shepherd Clerk.

5. Appointed a committee composed by brethren Abner Files, Jacob Feltman, John Yearbey, Walter Hamner and Willis Richards, with the Moderator and Clerk, to arrange the business necessary to come before the Association.

6. Appointed a committee, composed of brethren John Yearbey, Jesse Walden, Jacob Black, Willis Richards and Abner Files to arrange the preaching during this Association.

7. Adjourned until to-morrow 10 o'clock.

8. Met according to adjournment. After prayer by the Modera tor, called for the Report of the committee of Arrangement, which was presented, read, received and they discharged.

10. Called for the Circular Letter, which was read, approved and ordered to be fixed to the Minutes.

11. Received the appointments of Union meetings. The first in the second district, to be held at Union Church, to commence Friday before the first Sabbath in September, 1839; and the second in the first district, to be held at Bethlehem Church, to commence Friday before the first Sabbath in October, 1839.

12. *Resolved*, That the next Association of this body, be held at Zion Church, Marion county, Alabama, to commence Friday before the second Lord's day in November, 1839. Elder David Andrews, to preach the introductory sermon, and Elder Richard Walden his alternate.

13. Appointed brother Joshua Halbert to write the next Cirular Letter.

14. Agreed that the middle clause of the second line of the fifth Article of the Confession of Faith, be expunged, which reads as follows: "And for every individual in particular."

15. *Resolved*, That we will correspond and co-operate with all brethren of kindred spirits as far a practicable.

16. Received intelligence from the United Baptist Association in Georgia, and the Duck River Association in Tennessee; resolved to petition for a correspondence with said Associations; to the Duck river Association, brother Joshua Halbert to write to that body, and Elder R. Walden and brother A. Deason, visit them. To the United Baptist Association, Elder D. Andrews and J. Halbert Messengers, and D. Andrews to write.

17. Resolved to address a letter to the Columbus Association, and brethren D. Andrews, J. Halbert, J. Ray and J. Black, Messengers, and Isaac Shepherd to write to them.

18. Ordered 200 copies of these Minutes to be printed, and that brethren David Andrews, and Isaac Shepherd be requested to superintend the printing and distribution of the same.

19. *Resolved*, That this Association tender their thanks to the neighborhood of Union Church for their hospitality to the delegates and foreigners.

DAVID W. ANDREWS, *Moderator.*

Isaac Shepherd, *Clerk.*

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

Churches.	County.	C. M.	Ministers and Delegates.	Baptised.	Letter.	Secession.	Dismissed.	Excluded.	Restored.	Deceased.	Total.	dolls.	cts.
Bethlehem.	Tuscaloosa.	1.S	Abner Files, John Holley, Oliver Files.			1		4		1	18	2	
Union.	Fayette.	1.S	Jacob Black, John Ray, Jacob Feltman.	3	3			1		1	31	1	12½
Liberty.	Tuscaloosa.	4.S	Jno Yearbey, Joseph McGee.			2	2				23	2	50
Shepherd.	Fayette.	2.S	David Andrews, Isaac Shepherd, Jesse Walden.	21	3		3	4	1		44	4	
Zion.	Marion.	4.S	Walter Hamner, John Webb, Thadeus Webb.	7				1		1	29	1	75
Salem.	Tuscaloosa.	3.S	Joshua Halbert, Willis Richards, Isaac Cannon.	4	1	1	3			1	74	4	
				35	7	4	8	10	1	4	219	14	37½

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Ministers and Messengers of the North River United Baptist Association Convention at Union Church, October 12th, 1838, and days following, to the Churches they represent, send Greeting:

Dear Beloved Brethren:

The subject on which we address you at present, is that of Prayer. Prayer is of Divine appointment, and is the breathing of the soul unto God, the desires of the heart, by which we hold communion with God. Prayer appears to be not only a privilege, but a duty, confined to neither sect or denomination; for says Paul, "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting," 1 Tim. 2. 8.

> Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
> Unuttered or expressed,
> The motion of a hidden fire
> That trembles in the breast.

It is also that by which we draw nigh unto God and converse with him. By faith, hence says the Apostle, "let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith;" Heb. 10: 22. Hence then, prayer is not merely the uttering of words, but it is the uttering of the desires of the heart, and faith is the vehicle through which it is conveyed to a Throne of Grace by the spirit of God; for says an inspired Apostle: "His good spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;" Romans 8. 26. Prayer appears to have been practised amongst the people of God from an early age of the world, or at least from the birth of Enos, the son of Seth; Gen. 4. 26; and from that time throughout the different dispensations, we learn that prayer has been attended to by the people of God; and in various instances we discover the effects of it. When the Israelits sinned against God, and he visited them with fiery serpents, and they repented, God heard the prayer of Moses in their behalf, and an antidote was provided against the bite of those serpents; Numbers 21. When Jonah, the servant of God, prayed, though in the whale, God heard and delivered him. Another example, of the effect of prayer, we have on record in the 15th chap. of our Lord's Gospel by St. Mathew, from the 21st to the 28th verses, when the woman of Canaan came beseeching the Saviour in behalf of her daughter, his reply was, "O woman, great is thy faith, and her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Here we see the effect of prayer, and also the power of faith. What Jesus said unto the centurion is another striking feature of the effect of prayer:

the centurion besought the Saviour in behalf of his servant, when Jesus heard of his authority, he marvelled, and said unto the centurion, "Go thy way, and as thou has believed, so be it done unto thee, and his servant was healed the self same hour;" Matthew 8. 13. This is the effect of prayer and the power of faith, not of an infidel, nor a sceptic, nor an unbeliever, but a true worshiper of God in the spirit. Out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned, such a faith the unbeliever knows nothing of, nor never can only by the spirit. O then, what incouragement Christians have to pray for their children and their servants. Brethren, are our children greviously tormented with the devil, or are our servants sick of the palsey, look at the example of the woman of Canaan, and the centurion of Capernaum, for God converts sinners now like he used to do. But if our unconverted children and servants, have this faith, they are already healed, and they have no need of healing, and there is no need of those who have faith in Jesus, to pray for their healing; and as none can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy spirit, so none can have a living or saving faith in the Saviour, only by the spirit. And again, when Peter was sinking in the sea, what was his language? "Lord, save or I perish." Now, brethren, we are not of opinion that a mere outward form, or lip service, is to be accepted in the sight of God; for where the heart is not found, the sacrifice is not accepted; hence, says Solomon, "son, give me thy heart;" Proverbs 23. 36. We would not be understood as holding an idea than we can bring God under any obligations to us by our prayers, yet we are His creatures and are dependent upon him, and he is a God who will be sought unto for all things by the house of Isreal. Now, in order that we seek him aright, we must pray in faith. Hence, we hear an inspired Apostle saying, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;" James 5. 15.

Now, brethren, when we think on the languid state of Zion. does it not argue that something ought to be done; and what shall be done? Shall the people of God sit down contented, and still look for the spirit of God to be poured out on the people? By no means. Do we not hear the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the prophet, saying, "Wo to them that are at ease in Zion?" Amos 6. 1. which plainly shews that we have something to do; and if we search the word of God for our duty, we have it plainly laid down in the following language, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth more laborers into his harvest;" Mat. 9. 38. And for our encouragement, the Saviour has told us in the 14th chapter of his Gospel by St. John, and 14th verse, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name. I will do it;" and again, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in Heaven;" Mat. 18. 19. But, brethren, the limits of a circular would not contain our subject, for it appears, were we

to pursue it, it would swell to a volume. We would therefore recommend and exhort our brethren, and ourselves, to be more zealously engaged in this all-important duty, seeing that we have so much need of help, and being conscious that all our help must come from God. Perhaps some are ready to say, I cannot pray; but we are apprehensive if they are truly sensible of their own needs, and that of their fellow mortals, their language would be as fervent as the language of the Publican, who said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Now, brethren, were we all thus solemnly impressed, would we see so much languor in the world as it respects vital Religion? We think not.—But on the contrary, we should see crowded assemblies attending the worship of God: Zion would be traveling and bringing forth, and her gates would be crowded with young converts. Brethren, ask yourselves the question, is not the salvation of sinners a desirable object? Certainly it is. Then let us be up and doing, for says Solomon, "By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through;" Eccl. 10. 18. We therefore would admonish all our brethren to be more engaged in the solemn duty of prayer, as well as all the other duties which God hath enjoined upon us as his professed followers. Being thus exercised, we should have reason to hope that we ourselves should enjoy more of the presence of God and the sweets of his religion; that we should see numbers of our fellow mortals closing in with mercy, and walking in the ways of holiness; we should not find so many obstacles in our pilgrimage through this vale of sorrow. Yet the Saviour has informed us that "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom." Yet he has promised us grace according to our day. Therefore, dear brethren, let us endeavor to arise from our state of lethargy, pray God to clothe us with zeal and fortitude to run the christian race with patience, and to enclose our children, our neighbors, and our neighbor's children, in the net of the gospel, that we may at length see numerous households leaving the cares of the world behind them, and pressing on towards the Heavenly Jerusalem, to enter that rest which remains for the people of God; where all the children of the kingdom who come through much tribulation, shall meet ere long to join with angels and arch angels, cherubims and seraphims, to ascribe everlasting and undivided praise to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—world without end—Amen.

And now, Dear Brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to make you wise unto salvation; and may he prepare us all for a mansion at His right hand, is our prayer for his name sake—Amen.